

Basic Facts about Sarin (GB)

Background

- ▼ Sarin (GB) was originally developed in Germany in 1938, as an insecticide. The German Ministry of Defense required that it be tested for potential military usage.
- ▼ Sarin (GB) is a nerve agent. A nerve agent is a compound that is designed to kill people by binding up a compound known as acetylcholinesterase (the body's off switch), this compound is essential for removing acetylcholine, the body's voluntary muscle and gland "on switch." With reduced or no acetylcholinesterase, the glands and voluntary muscles continue to be stimulated by the acetylcholine; eventually the muscles tire and can no longer sustain breathing functions.

Risk

- ▼ Sarin is lethal. It can enter the body by inhalation, ingestion, through the eyes, and to a lesser extent through the skin.
- ▼ Sarin is generally non-persistent, it evaporates at approximately the same rate as water.

Symptoms

- ▼ Symptoms may appear in varying order based on route of exposure (the way it entered the body), but commonly noted symptoms include:

Runny nose

Watery eyes

Drooling and excessive sweating

Tightness of the chest

Difficulty in breathing

Dimness of vision (pupils may become pinpointed)

Nausea

Vomiting, cramps, and loss of bladder/bowel control

Twitching, jerking, and staggering

Headache, confusion, drowsiness, coma, and convulsions

Decontamination

- ▼ Skin: Remove contaminated clothing and wash skin with large amounts of soap and water or 5% liquid household bleach. Rinse well with water.

- ▼ If you believe that you have gotten Sarin in your eyes, immediately flush your eyes with water for 10 - 15 minutes.
- ▼ If you believe that you have eaten or drank something with Sarin on it or in it, do not induce vomiting.

Treatment

- ▼ If you believe that you have been exposed to Sarin, you first should remove the agent from the skin and call 911. Ambulance teams and hospitals in many communities are stocking the antidotes.